

c.) Amendments to the Claims.

Claim 1. (currently amended) A clasp comprising:

a hook portion formed from a first section, a second section coupled perpendicularly to a first end of the first section in a first direction, and a third section coupled perpendicularly to a first end of the second section and parallel to the first section;

a grip portion adjacent to the hook portion having a first end adjacent to and coaxial with the second section; and

an attachment portion having a first end coupled to a second end of the grip portion and a second end coupled, in a second direction opposite from the first direction, to the second end of the first section, wherein the attachment portion and the grip portion are interconnected[[:]]

~~wherein the hook portion is formed from multiple straight sections and includes a first straight section, a second straight section and a third straight section, wherein the first straight section is connected to and perpendicular with the second straight section and the second straight section is connected to and perpendicular with the third straight section, and said hook portion, when attached to a connecting surface, spreads force applied by the hook portion across said connecting surface.~~

Claim 2. (currently amended) The clasp of claim 1, further comprising a cord attached at one terminus of said cord to the eerd attachment portion.

Claim 3. (original) The clasp of claim 2, further comprising a second clasp attached to another terminus of said cord.

Claim 4. (original) The clasp of claim 2, wherein the cord is stretchable.

Claim 5. (previously presented) The clasp of claim 1, wherein the grip portion is ergonomically molded.

Claim 6. (original) The clasp of claim 1, wherein the first section is longer than the second section.

Claim 7. (original) The clasp of claim 1, wherein the second section is longer than the third section.

Claim 8. (previously presented) The clasp of claim 1, wherein said first, second and third sections are in the same two-dimensional plane.

Claim 9. (previously presented) The clasp of claim 1, wherein at least two of said first, second and third sections are in parallel two-dimensional planes.

Claim 10. (canceled).

Claim 11. (currently amended) The clasp of claim ~~[[43]]~~ 17, wherein the single shaped rod is rounded.

Claim 12. (original) The clasp of claim 1, wherein the clasp is comprised of a material selected from the group consisting of a metal alloy, aluminum, brass, hardened plastic, steel, titanium, and combinations thereof.

Claim 13. (previously presented) The clasp of claim 1, wherein the clasp is comprised of steel or aluminum.

Claim 14. (previously presented) The clasp of claim 5, wherein the grip portion is ergonomically molded as a curved, rounded rod.

Claim 15. (original) The clasp of claim 1, wherein a pinch section separates the grip portion from the attachment portion.

Claim 16. (previously presented) The clasp of claim 15, wherein the pinch section prevents a cord attached to the attachment portion from entering the grip portion.

Claim 17. (currently amended) The clasp of claim 1, wherein ~~the first section is attached to grip portion~~ the clasp is formed from a single rod.

Claim 18. (currently amended) The clasp of claim 1, wherein the clasp secures equipment to ~~[[the]]~~ a vehicle.

Claim 19. (previously presented) The clasp of claim 1, wherein the clasp attaches to a rack of a vehicle and is capable of securing equipment to the vehicle.

Claim 20. (original) The clasp of claim 19, wherein the equipment comprises a ladder.

Claims 21 -24. (canceled)

Claim 25. (currently amended) The device of claim ~~[[22]] 44~~, wherein each clasp is formed from a shaped, single, rounded rod ~~the first section is attached to the grip portion.~~

Claim 26. (currently amended) The device of claim ~~[[22]] 44~~, wherein the cord is a bungee cord.

Claim 27. (currently amended) The device of claim ~~[[22]] 25~~, wherein the shaped rounded rod of each clasp is comprised of a material selected from the group consisting of a metal alloy, aluminum, brass, hardened plastic, steel, titanium, and combinations thereof.

Claims 28 - 29. (canceled)

Claim 30. (currently amended) The device of claim ~~[[22]] 44~~, wherein the device secures equipment to a vehicle.

Claim 31. (currently amended) The device of claim ~~[[22]] 30~~, wherein the device attaches to a rack on the vehicle.

Claim 32. (previously presented) The device of claim 30, wherein the equipment comprises a ladder.

Claims 33. – 43. (canceled).

Claim 44. (new) A retaining device, comprising:

two clasps, wherein each clasp is comprised of:

a hook portion formed from a first section, a second section coupled perpendicularly to a first end of the first section in a first direction, and a third section coupled perpendicularly to a first end of the second section and parallel to the first portion;

a grip portion having a first end adjacent to and coaxial with the second section; and

an attachment portion having a first end coupled to a second end of the grip portion and a second end coupled, in a second direction opposite from the first direction, to the second end of the first section, wherein the attachment portion and the grip portion are interconnected; and

a cord, wherein a first end of the cord is coupled to the grip portion of a first clasp and the second end of the cord is coupled to the grip portion of a second clasp.